

Questions Requested by Participants on First Day of Cumulative Impacts Workshop conducted July 20-22, 2004 in Chicago, Illinois and Most Useful Tools and Approaches Learned

A. Prior to the workshop, participants were requested to identify the questions that they wanted answered and addressed during the workshop. The consultant's referred to this list throughout the workshop, and, at the end, checked with the participants to ensure that their needs were successfully met by the workshop itself.

- How and when would you do cumulative impact analysis for a tiered NEPA project?
- How do you define the timeframe and geographical scope for a cumulative impact analysis?
- How do you defend a cumulative impact analysis in court in terms of something that is well defined? Seems nebulous.
- When and how do you determine how to separate conjecture and speculation from what would actually happen in terms of a cumulative impact analysis?
- How do you decide when a cumulative impact is significant?
- How do you most effectively communicate a cumulative impact analysis to a broad range of people with different backgrounds and knowledge?
- What are the most common mistakes when conducting cumulative impact analyses, and how can those mistakes be avoided or remedied?
- How do you most effectively communicate the whole intent of a cumulative impact analysis?
- How do you evaluate induced development within a cumulative impact analysis? What types of models are available?
- To what extent are agencies responsible for mitigating the cumulative impacts, especially when resources impacted are protected under the Clean Air Act Section 404 and the Endangered Species Act?
- Are there any national clearinghouses where we can learn from other agencies regarding their experiences with cumulative impact analyses/
- When do you have enough data/information/analysis for a complete cumulative impact analysis?
- How do you defuse the emotional components involved in cumulative impact analyses?
- Where is it most effective to put cumulative impact analyses in a NEPA document? Which chapter?
- How do you get resource specialists to set significance thresholds for cumulative impacts for a resource?
- How does a federal agency get another agency to recognize and deal with cumulative impacts?

- How does one identify non-federal actions that should be included in a cumulative impact analysis?
- How do we conduct cumulative economic impacts, particularly when associated with Environmental Justice?
- How do you identify and conduct a cumulative cost-benefit analysis?
- How do you address a consultant's statement that all future impacts are covered by regulations and that, therefore, no cumulative impacts would occur?
- How do you account for and incorporate the impacts associated with private actions within a cumulative impact analysis?
- What are some practical tools for conducting cumulative impact analyses?
- What specific court cases have addressed cumulative impacts and what are the main issues?
- What are the interrelationships between cumulative impact analyses and categorical exclusions, especially when the potential for a cumulative impact on a resource exists?
- How do you conduct a cumulative impact analysis identifying and incorporating future actions/induced growth where there is no planning/zoning and a community emphasizes growth?
- What are some reasonable ways (tools) for quantifying and assessing cumulative impacts for water, aquatic resources, air, soils, etc?
- Is there anyone working on developing a sample cumulative impact analysis that can be used as an example?
- How are cumulative impact analyses under NEPA and the Endangered Species Act the same and different?
- Do you have to conduct cumulative impact analysis for a resource for all the alternatives?
- Is there any guidance on identifying the environmentally preferred alternative(s)?
- What is the relationship between the "substantive standard" under law and cumulative impact analysis?
- How does the requirement to consider cumulative impacts related to the requirement for streamlining under TEA-21?
- What is the difference between indirect and cumulative impacts?
- Do you only need to consider other Federal projects in a cumulative impact analysis?
- How do you determine the appropriate baseline for a cumulative impact analysis?
- Do you use the same temporal and spatial "box" for all the cumulative impact analyses?

- Is professional judgment of the agency interdisciplinary staff sufficient for predicting cumulative impacts?

B. At the end of the workshop, participants were requested to identify one practical thing that they learned at the workshop that could be used immediately at work.

The following points were identified by the participants:

- Another more practical approach to conducting cumulative impact analyses (cause-and-effect relationships)
- You don't have to conduct a cumulative impact analysis for a resource if the federal project under consideration does not affect that particular resource (even if the resource itself is experiencing cumulative impacts from actions unrelated to the proposed action)
- Methods for putting cumulative impacts on a resource in the context of other impacts related to that resource
- When setting up a cumulative impact analysis, focus on the resource first, not the actions contributing to the impact
- Using the systematic interdisciplinary approach is the "way to go"
- The importance of the analysis of the cumulative impacts associated with the "no action" alternative as the baseline for the subsequent analysis of cumulative impact of the action alternatives
- Use the cause-and-effect relationship approach to identifying whether an impact on a resource is a cumulative impact
- Describe the reasonably foreseeable future actions incorporated into a cumulative impact analysis
- The importance of identifying the appropriate baseline for a cumulative impact analysis
- Conduct the cumulative impacts associated with the "no action" alternative before conducting the analyses of the action alternatives
- Understanding how to develop the spatial and temporal boundaries using cause-and-effect relationships for each resource
- Understanding the difference between information and analysis
- Learning better techniques for evaluating direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts
- Conducting cumulative impact analyses for a resource may also be appropriate under the "no action" alternative
- "Document, document, document!" Provide the reasons for why do did what you did for cumulative impact analyses (and everything else!)
- Only focus on the resources and actions that are important to a particular decision using cause-and-effect relationships
- Understanding when legal considerations are important and what they are for a particular analysis and decision

- Understanding how different agencies have the same issues and problems when it comes to conducting cumulative impact analyses
- The importance of having interaction between those professionals who prepare NEPA documents and conduct the analyses and those who review and react to them
- Do not accept information without the analysis of that information
- New court cases to consider